

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 03801 100803Z
ACTION NEA-10

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-----050892 110805Z /64
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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 87

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 3801

FOR NEA/INS ONLY

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SPOP,IN
SUBJECT: FAMILY PLANNING

REF: A) STATE 40285 B) NEW DELHI 2566
C) NEW DELHI 3035 D) NEW DELHI TOAID A-1 (2/14/78)

1. REF. C, PARA 4.9 AND REF. D PROVIDE GIST OF OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE JANATA GOVERNMENT'S POPULATION PROGRAM. WE TAKE THE INCREASE IN THE FAMILY PLANNING BUDGET (FROM RS. 900 M TO RS. 1110 M) FOR IFY 1978/79, AND THE FINANCE MINISTER'S SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO FAMILY PLANNING IN HIS BUDGET SPEECH, AS TWO MORE INDICATIONS THAT THIS GOVERNMENT IS ATTACHING MORE IMPORTANCE TO THE POPULATION EFFORT.

2. NONETHELESS WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT NEW INITIATIVES SPECIFICALLY ORIENTED TOWARD FAMILY PLANNING. THE ONE MAJOR GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE WHICH SHOULD EVENTUALLY PROVIDE AS ASSIO THE POPULATION EFFORT - THE RURAL HEALTH DELIVERY SCHEME - IS UNLIKELY TO MAKE ANY NATIONAL DIFFERENCE TO THE FAMILY PLANNING FIGURES UNTIL IT HAS BEEN OPERATIONAL FOR AT LEAST A COUPLE OF YEARS.

3. ALTHOUGH THE SETBACK TO THE POPULATION PROGRAM HAS BEEN FELT
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THOUGHOUT INDIA, WE BELIEVE THAT A REVIVAL WILL COME MORE QUICKLY IN THE SOUTH THAN IN THE NORTH. THE IMPRESSION OF EMBASSY OFFICERS WHO HAVE TRAVELLED AROUND INDIA IS THAT LOCAL OFFICIALS IN THE NORTH ARE HESITANT TO TALK ABOUT POPULATION, MUCH LESS DISPLAY ANY ENTHUSIASM - IN CONTRAST TO THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE SOUTH, WHO READILY ACKNOWLEDGE THE SETBACK BUT SEEM TO BE ANXIOUS TO FIND ACCEPTABLE WAY OF RELAUNCHING THE PROGRAM.

GOHEEN

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